

REMARKS

Prior to this paper, claims 1-6 and 9-22 were pending in the present application. Applicants do not add or cancel any claims. However, applicants amend the claims, as seen above, to insert the term "blood" in front of the term "vessel" in the claims.

Applicants respectfully submit that the present application is in condition for allowance.

Interviews of February 19-20, 2004

Examiner Roberts initiated a series of telephone interviews with Applicants' representative on February 19 and 20, 2004, where Applicants' representative agreed to insert the term "blood" in front of the term "vessel" in the claims via a supplemental amendment. During the interviews, the independent claims were discussed, and USP 3,760,627 and USP 5,666,710 were also discussed. It was alleged that the just mentioned references might render at least claim 12 unpatentable, and applicants' representative disagreed, but to advance prosecution, Applicants agree to the above claim amendments.

Reference Characters

Reference characters have been retained in the claims but have no effect on the claim scope per MPEP § 608.01(m)

Rejoinder

Applicants note that claim 6 is dependent from a claim that has been identified as a generic claim, claim 4. Applicants further note that claim 4 has been indicated as containing allowable subject matter. Thus, Applicants respectfully request that claim 6 be rejoined for consideration and allowance.

Applicants, of course, continue to reserve the right to file one or more divisional applications covering any non-elected subject matter.

Conclusion

Applicants believe that the present application is now in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration of the application as amended is respectfully requested.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, applicant hereby petitions for such extension under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 and authorizes payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

Examiner Roberts is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

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